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Yes





When suddenly I heard the shrill cries of a child.
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Denison, Mary Andrews

ORPHAN ANNE.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "A NOBLE SISTER," "LED TO THE LIGHT," "MILL AGENT,"
"OPPOSITE THE JAIL," ETC., ETC.

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ORPHAN ANNE.

CHAPTER I.

Finding an Orphan.

BUSINESS called me one day through a succession of the narrowest and worst streets of the city. The houses were generally relics of bygone greatness. If houses could be subject to certain maladies, as human beings are, then I should say that some seemed rheumatic, some feverish, some consumptive; and each had a ghastly air, as if it was sure that with

all its aches and pains and stiffness and age, decay was not very far off.

I was thinking these queer thoughts, and wondering if the many stains might not be considered the marks of the sorrowful tears which these wretched tenements had shed, when suddenly I heard the shrill cries of a child, "O! don't beat me, don't beat me;" and at the same time a succession of heavy blows sounded on tender human flesh.

I stopped; I never can bear to hear a child cry, and this little voice was very piteous.

"It's Marm Hague beating Annie," said a coarse woman who had just

come out of a shop, and stood listening like myself. "She's in one of her drunken fits, likely. I never did see how she do abuse that poor child."

"Who is Marm Hague?" I asked, my blood curdling at the sound.

"She's an old creature as isn't liked much by her neighbors, sir," replied the woman, lifting her basket. "It's too bad of her, sir, but the little one's not got father or mother, and that old hag does just as she pleases."

By this time the cries had grown fainter, as if the child had been tortured till her exhaustion prevented any resistance, even the feeblest. I could bear the horror of suspense no longer,

but throwing open an old rickety door I encountered the blackness, the rottenness, and the dirt, and groped my way up to what I supposed was the room tenanted by the heartless woman.

My knock at the door was evidently an unwelcome one, for there was considerable stir within, and when at last the door was thrown open, the smell of bad whisky made me quite faint. How can I picture the woman who stood before me or the interior of that foul room? Surely one of Macbeth's witches could not have been more wrinkled, filthy, or repulsive in every respect than this tyrant over helpless childhood.

A bottle of whisky had evidently been overturned, the vile liquor spilt, the glass bottle broken. There was not a whole piece of furniture in the room; the floor was strewn with all manner of dirt. Grease and rags abounded. Brown paper bulged from broken panes where glass had not been for an age. I stood there, shocked and half paralyzed. I had not seen the child yet, but I heard her low, moaning sobs.

“Well, what ye want,” cried the virago, savagely. I unbuttoned my overcoat, under that I had on a military coat with brass buttons, for I was then in the service of the United States.

The woman recoiled; a deadly terror paled her grim features; she evidently took me for a policeman.

“You were beating a child cruelly,” I said in my sternest voice. “I have come to see what the matter is. Where is she?”

“Whist, Anne,” cried the treacherous voice, trembling with fear, “whist I tell ye. Sure she is a careless and a bad girl intirely, that she is, always oversetting things. ’Twas the whisky she spilt, as took my last fourpence to buy, and there it is, sir, on the floor, intirely wasted.”

“As it ought to be,” I said; “Anne come here.”

My summons not being immediately responded to, the amiable Madam Hague took the child by the arm and dragged her forward.

“Stop, no violence,” I said, seeing the uplifted hand. “Don’t be frightened, Anne, I shan’t let you be hurt,” for indeed the child won upon my sympathies at the first sight. Not that she was remarkably beautiful, for she was nothing of the kind, only a little, slender, large eyed child, dirty and ragged and cowed, yet bearing upon her poor little brow, on which were plastered the tangled curls, the marks of that infantile innocence that Christ sanctified, by his words and deeds,

towards children, saying that "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

"Whose child is this?" I asked.

"Mine," was the reply.

"Is this woman your mother, little one?" I asked. The child did not dare reply. "You tell an untruth, woman," I added; "this poor child has neither father or mother, and you dare presume upon her helplessness, and treat her like a brute. I shall take her away with me." The woman began wringing her hands, but she evidently stood in fear of the law, considering me one of its representatives, and dared not resist. I took the poor, miserable,

frightened thing by one of its dirty hands, and led it trembling from head to foot, as only a fearful child can tremble. How I pitied the miserable, neglected infant, for she could have been scarcely six years old, at an age when the tenderest care is needed. At the threshold of the door I paused; I had incurred a responsibility thoughtlessly; what was I to do with the poor little thing, now I had her? I looked at her and revolted at the thought of going through the public streets with such a little batch of dirt and rags. I had a fastidious young wife at home, and a sister who did not scruple to laugh at my oddities; I was

foolishly sensitive, and had been the hero of a number of *Quixotic* schemes not always resulting to my satisfaction, or that of anybody else. In a moment my mind was made up, I called a carriage, deposited my burden, in spite of the black looks of the genteel coachman, and entering, drove home. The child sat on the back seat, and I had a good opportunity to study her. She had ceased to sob, and only now and then drew a deep, unchildish breath. She seemed utterly bewildered at the situation, never before in all probability having seen the interior of a carriage. Her eyes were dark and very expressive; what the color of her com-

plexion was, the dirt did not leave me at liberty to judge, but I noticed that though diminutive through neglect and starvation, her figure was good and her face on the whole remarkably intelligent. Her hands were small, the smallest I ever saw on a child of her age, and her dirty little feet were well formed. She held on to the seat with a sort of misgiving as if she feared it would slide away from her, and all her poor little gilded dream would fade, and leave her in the old, miserable place. Meanwhile I occupied myself in wondering what my wife would say, and what excuse I should frame for introducing such an uncouth visitor.

What she did say, and what I said and done, the reader will be informed in the next chapter, when I shall drop my own ideality, and in the form of a narrative, describe the new surroundings, and how they acted upon the poor little orphan Annie.

CHAPTER II.

Two Poodles.



PLEASANT parlor in a small neat and perfectly furnished house. Not a mote of dust to be seen anywhere, not even in the long wavy lines of gold that the sun sent in, unless one looked very steadily, and then they seem transmitted into flecks of gold dust. Two ladies sat sewing, one near the newly kindled fire, for it was the last of September, the other at the window watching some-

times the shifting panorama of a city street.

“See that poor little child, Mary,” said Nellie, the youngest of the two; “how it makes my heart ache to witness such sights!” Mary arose and went to the window. Two children stood there, both young, indeed they might have been taken for two miserable little twins, and one of them held an old crust to the lips of the other, who was evidently half famished. Their eyes were sore and bleared, their clothes ragged and disgustingly filthy. Mary opened the door, called the servant and sent them each out a slice of well buttered, sweet bread.

Nellie laughed as they devoured it. "The hungry little heathens," she exclaimed, but the warm tears filled her eyes, and she felt a choking in her throat, and the words came up spontaneously in her head, "What hath made us to differ?"

"I wonder if Providence didn't intend that I should be matron in a foundling hospital or something of the sort. I have such a queer feeling when I see those distressed children. I dare not think my own thoughts, either, for if I did I'm afraid I should question the mercy of Him who allows such forlorn little creatures to suffer."

"We should grow as hard as nether

mill stones;" said Mary, if we never saw such sights to quicken our sympathies; there must be contrasts, it seems to be a law of nature. The question is, what shall we do for them?"

"Perhaps we should not be allowed to do for them at all;" responded Nellie, resuming her sewing. "They are probably invaluable to some poor besotten parent, who trade on their rags and wretchedness, and who if they are not supplied with money of their begging, beat them miserably. If we clothed them, the horrid creatures would pawn their clothes, if we fed them they would be less inclined to

work for themselves, and so bring on added suffering."

"I have thought," said Mary, gazing into the soft flame of the fire, "that if in every household where there were no children, one of these poor miserable creatures could be adopted, how many would be saved from want and degredation, and yet I should never have the courage to go and find such a one, and perhaps the patience to keep it and attend to its wants, if I did. It requires more self-denial, I suppose, to bring up the child of another, than your own; at least I should think so."

Nellie laughed.

"That's what I always think," she

said, "when I go over to Mrs. Longman's. There she sits, in one of her beautiful easy chairs, exquisitely dressed, with one horrid little white poodle with inflamed eyes on her knee, and another on a stool beside her; two fat, pampered, vicious specimens of dog-hood; and she will dwell for hours on what she considers their fine points, their symptoms and their canine follies generally. I say to myself, oh my dear Mrs. Longman, if you would put on a pretty, plain dress, and pet some poor little one who has never known such caresses as you give Fanny and Petit, how much more womanly you would look!"

CHAPTER III.

Brought Home.

PERHAPS she is not fit to bring up children," said Mary.

"She is fit at least to treat them as well as she does her dogs, and I think her instincts, if nothing deeper, would in time teach her that they had souls. But, dear Mary, here comes a carriage; it has stopped at our door; Leonard is in it—and—oh! what has he brought?"

Mary ran to the window, from thence to the door. At first she

thought that perhaps her husband's wound troubled him, and it made her turn pale ; but when he came in, leading the miserable little creature he had so shortly before rescued from a brutal taskmistress, she stopped short in sheer amazement and looked at him with wide, open, inquisitive eyes.

“I couldn't find you a lap-dog,” was his first laughing exclamation, curiously enough, “so I got you the next best thing ; what do you think of it?”

“Why, Leonard, what do you mean ? I think it's horrible,” she said, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

“Well, I shall hand it over to your tender mercies,” he said, “and if it

can't find a home here, it must be carried somewhere else, I suppose. Go to the fire, little girl, and get warm."

"Where did you find her?" asked Nellie, while the child never stirred.

"In one of those old streets in the north end, where, if I had not rescued her, she might have been beaten to death." Mary shuddered.

"By her mother?"

"No, poor child, she has neither father nor mother."

"The poor little thing!" said Nellie, who was laying aside her sewing. Then she went up to the child and looked it over much as if it had been a wild animal.

“So your mother is dead, little one?” she asked. The child nodded and hung down her head.

“But what are we going to do, Leonard, we have no clothes, only those that belonged to Dotty,” she said, a sudden trouble coming in her eyes. Dotty was a little sister of whom Mary had had the charge for several years, and who had been accidentally drowned. Ever since the sad event, Mrs. Dinsmore, the wife of Lieutenant Leonard Dinsmore, had jealously guarded the little wardrobe. Sometimes she would show it to visitors, the beautiful embroidered dresses of all soft fabrics, the little shoes

and stockings that the five year old child had worn.

“Only those of little Dotty,” she repeated, thoughtfully. “I can’t put them on her.”

“Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these,” repeated her husband, smiling, then added, “whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth Me.” Mary’s eyes filled with tears.

“O, Leonard, *could* I! oh, Leonard, can you ask me?” she cried, with quick quivering lips.

“No, dear,” was his answer, “I don’t ask you to make any sacrifice; I don’t even wish you to keep the poor little motherless waif, only, I was afraid she

would be beaten to death, and I didn't know where else to take her. I suppose there are places enough, Orphan Asylums, and the like."

"Poor little thing," whispered Mary, taking a long look at the wistful eyes; "she might be even pretty, I expect, if she were only reasonably clean."

CHAPTER IV.

Shall she have Dotty's Clothes?

I KNEW she would be," replied Nellie promptly, "and if you are willing, I'll soon make her presentable."

"We ought at least to do that," said Mary, thoughtfully. "You might put on that plain crimson merino, and the little white apron with straps."

"And shoes and stockings?"

"Not the pair she wore," said Mary, with a sudden pang, "one of the new ones."

Nelly was all activity now. Her plain sweet face glowed with the gentle benignity of her heart. She was a lovely girl in character, with many generous impulses, and small sympathies, remaining inert in this limited household, where there were no little tireless feet and ever running tongues to call for constant exertion, either for mind or body. The child glanced up at her, with a lowering side glance, diminishing the little prettiness that she might be supposed to possess, when Nellie held out her hand for her to go and be washed, but presently she put the little black fist in the girl's kind clasping fingers, and

marched off, apparently quite sure that she had found friends.

“Do you want me to keep her, Leonard?” asked Mary, as her husband stooped to kiss her

“I want you to do just exactly as your heart dictates, dear,” he replied. “I dare say if you think she will be a trouble to you, we can put her where she will be attended to. Of course I cannot ask you to take so much care and trial on yourself, unless you could make it a positive pleasure to take care of this, Christ’s poor neglected little one.”

Mary’s own words came back to her. She was not especially fond of children,

but after Leonard had gone out, she found herself thinking of little Dotty, the darling sister she had lost.

“But she was so beautiful!” she murmured, “so winning and delicate in all her ways, and this poor repulsive little thing, the child perhaps of low parents, the inheritor of evil passions and ill health.” Ah! but the sweet words of the Saviour seemed to blaze before her,

“Whoso receiveth one of these little ones in My name, receiveth Me.

“Receiveth ME,” she murmured. “Receiveth the Lord Christ, king of heaven and earth, Lord of all lords, why the thought is almost overwhelm-

ing, as I look at it in the light of the presence of this poor neglected one. The words never had such a meaning before—never. They make me feel what I am, and what powers I possess as an immortal being. Who knows for what God has raised up this child? Why should Leonard among all the thousands of wretched children have brought this one to rescue from degradation and vice? Lord help me to understand. Lord help me to put self aside, help me to know the value of a soul, one soul, snatched from the fire.”

A sweet and solemn serenity took possession of the woman now. Who could tell what angel unawares had

brought blessings to that happy home? She had almost made up her mind to accept the care of the little one, when the door opened, and in came Mrs. Longman, dressed in a dainty blue silk, her ribbons and laces fresh, while pulling at one end of a thin white silk cord, stood a minute epitome of a white dog with pink eyes and a silver collar on his neck.

“I wouldn’t let them announce me,” said the fashionable woman. “Come, pet, come; one would think she was obstinate, but she only feels a little strange. I knew you were all alone, at least only with your sister. Now isn’t Fanny a willful little thing; I really

believe she is willful sometimes," and stooping down she gathered the yelping creature in her arms, and holding her under her soft white cheek, took the chair that Mary offered.

"The naughty little thing," she cried in playful tones, and with her finger uplifted, do you know she has kept me from the fresh air, Mrs. Dinsmore, for three whole days—yes, positively."

"Why, pray?" asked Mary.

"She has been sick, the little delicate creature," replied the dog's mistress, tenderly petting its silken paws; "this breed is so rare, very sensitive to our climate. I gave fifty dollars for her; you'd hardly believe it, would you?"

“I should call it expensive,” said Mary, smiling.

“O, very, and she feeds like a little princess; you’d laugh, I expect, if I told you what her bills are. She has her milk first like any little child, and Petit is just as bad. But then they *are* such a comfort, you cannot think how much company the little creatures are, only I must say that Fanny, when sick, is very cross, but then so would a child be. I wonder you don’t have one, Mrs. Dinsmore, it would be such company for you. You needn’t be so particular as I was, you know, they come much cheaper.”

“I never had a fancy for dogs, as

pets," said Mary, looking half aside at the ugly little specimen that sat blinking in the lap of its mistress.

"Ah! that's because you have never tried them, and don't know what affectionate little things they are, and how pleasant it is to have them greet you when you come home, but then to be sure I seldom leave Fanny at home. It is rather *distingué* now-a-days to have a fine lap-dog, and it gives one something to do on the street, although to be sure they are *sometimes* in the way."

CHAPTER V.

A Pretty Child.



T that moment there was the sound of little feet on the stairs and on the hall-carpet. Nellie, unconscious that there was a visitor, opened the door and paraded little Anne on the threshold. Soap and water had done the tiny waif a world of good, her hair was decently curled, her bright dress set off her rather colorless complexion; the little apron, white as snow, set off the bright

dress, and the thin ankles were encased in stockings of the finest and whitest texture. Altogether little Anne did credit to her new friends, though she had not yet lost the shy frightened look that had become habitual to her.

“Why, what nice little girl have you got here?” inquired Mrs. Longman, her attention diverted from the pink-eyed pet for a moment. “Is it some neighbor’s child?” Mary blushed.

“It’s a poor little thing Leonard brought home,” said Nellie, leading the child, who looked with round eyed wonder on everything she saw, from the piano to the pretty sewing-machine to a lower seat than the rest.

“You don’t mean to say!” exclaimed the fashionable woman, aghast.

“That it’s a poor little waif, an orphan without a home. Leonard heard it being dreadfully beaten, and immediately took it away and brought it here.”

“From some low place, I suppose?”

“Yes, it’s not to be denied that the place was low, and everything was low about her, but I think she pays for dressing; don’t you, Mary?”

“O, but how do you know but she brought some horrible disease in her old clothes?” asked Mrs. Longman, shrinking away with her pet.

“We had of course to run the risk

of that," said Nellie, quietly, with a half smile, "but I didn't feel alarmed at all. It is very healthy in the city, now."

"And you put on little Dotty's dresses?" she asked, with an accent of intensified horror.

"They might better be clothing the back of the naked, than rotting up there in the dark," returned Nellie, with a contemptuous look at the curled darling, that now began a succession of sharp petulant yelps.

"Well, every one to his fancy, I'm sure," said Mrs. Longman, fondling her dog, and stopping him from complaining with sugar drops, "but I never

dreamed *you* would take such trouble on yourself, Mrs. Dinsmore !”

“I don’t believe she will be any more trouble than your two dogs are, Mrs. Longman, and I am sure she will be more intelligent,” laughed Nellie.

“Every one to their fancy, as I said before,” responded Mrs. Longman, rising to go. “I’m sure I wouldn’t be troubled with a child like that. Why see how she will hang on your hands ! She must be clothed and educated ; she will allow you no time to visit ; you will have noise when you long for quiet ; you will have to tax your ingenuity to the utmost to keep her pleased. I’d rather have my poodles.”

“You’re welcome to them,” said Nellie, as Mrs. Longman disappeared, followed by Mary. “I think God is better pleased, though, to see the saving of an immortal soul. At any rate I don’t think it will ever be my vocation to train poodles.”

“What do you think of her,” asked Nellie, as Mary came back.

“Who? of Mrs. Longman?”

“No, indeed: I had forgotten the silly woman; I mean the child. Come here, Anne.” The little girl lifted herself mechanically and came towards the two women. Mary surveyed her with a critical glance.

“She is really prettier than I ever

thought she would look," she replied. "She has dimples and curly hair, hasn't she?"

"Yes, and you forget her fine soulful eyes. She is much prettier than the majority of children, now confess."

"Something about her makes me think of Dotty," said Mary, her lips trembling.

"Yes, her helplessness, her delicacy; do you suppose she can be very wicked? I have heard such children are. That's the only thing that would trouble me, the unlearning of bad deeds and habits. I wonder what she remembers!"

"Do you recollect your mother, Anne?"

The child nodded, adding eagerly, "they carried her off; carried her away in a big black thing, and she never came back."

"Where did you live then?"

"It was—it was—I don't know," she replied, "Marm Hague took me afterwards, and beat me every day."

"Did you like Marm Hague?"

"No," and a look of horror overspread her face; "she beat me so."

"Poor little thing! Mary, there were great welts on her shoulders when I put her in the bath. How awful to treat a motherless child that way! Where is your father, my dear?"

"He's—he's dead."

“Do you remember him?”

“Yes, a little, he—he got drunk,” added the child, “and mammy cried.”

“Poor thing! she has seen nothing but the dark side of human nature all her life. Did you ever go to school?”

“What a question, Nellie?”

“Foolish, I suppose,” returned Nellie, laughing; “she don’t seem even to know what I mean. Did mamma ever tell little Anne about God, and Jesus?”

“She told me, Lord teach a little child to pray,” said Anne triumphantly.

“There!” cried Nellie, “now I feel better. The mother, at least, must have been a Christian woman. And can you say it now? Try.”

But Anne could get no further, than,
“Lord teach a little child to pray.”

“And when you went to sleep, did your mamma tell you to kneel down and pray to God?”

Anne nodded affirmatively.

“And do you remember what you said?”

The child thought hard with a puzzled face.

“Was it now I lay me?”

“Down to sleep,” nodded little Anne, “that’s it.”

“O, Mary, she must have had a good mother,” cried Nellie again.

“Would you like to stay here with us?” Mary began.

“Yes’m,” said the child.

“Nellie, I wonder if she wouldn’t like Dotty’s doll, I mean the one with the cracked nose; I don’t believe the child ever had one.” Then she went up stairs, and opened reverently a little drawer that smelt of rose leaves. It had been the toy depository of the little girl that was drowned, and it was filled with toys. Mary looked at it a moment with tears in her eyes, and then selected from among three or four dolls, one a little the worse for wear, but still quite attractive. This she carried down, and to the little girl’s intense delight, gave it to her.

“I see ’em in the windows,” she said,

looking it over as if it was some rare treasure, "but the man wouldn't give Anne one unless she had some money."

"Isn't she cunning?" inquired Nellie, with words and winks, as the child ensconced in Dotty's little rocking chair, immediately fell into those small, motherly ways that mark a five year older when she first plays matron. "I'm sure it don't seem as if she would be a bit of trouble. If she has ugly ways wouldn't she have shown them off before now."

"Everything is new to her," replied Mary.

CHAPTER VI.

Our Saviour's Words.

ELL, how is our small accession?" inquired Leonard, as he came home to dinner.

"You havn't got tired of her and packed her off, have you?" he added, looking about the room. A pretty little apartment led out of the parlor, into this Mary beckoned her husband, and Nellie crept behind them on tiptoe. There on a lounge, habited in a simple white dressing gown, laid the child asleep.

“You don’t tell me,” cried Leonard expressing genuine surprise, “that that is the child! How clean and pretty she looks! I can hardly believe my eyes. What have you been doing to her?”

“Washing her,” said Nellie, laughing.

“Well, how long are you going to keep her? I went out to see a board of directors this afternoon about putting her in some establishment.”

“O, Leonard!” cried Mary.

“Now, Leonard, you are too bad,” said his sister.

“But how did I know what you would do with her? and she was such

a wretched looking little thing, I never dreamed you would get up any sentiment over her."

"She's a dear little kitten," cried Nellie, with enthusiasm.

"Softly, softly, sister, you can't tell what she is yet. The situation is novel to her. She may swear like a dragoon, and——"

"O, Leonard, you may be sure we have been sounding her. She must have had a good mother once, who taught her little hymns and prayers. She doesn't seem to know much wickedness, though I dare say we shall find in the course of time that she can do disagreeable things."

“In the course of time? then you contemplate letting her stay here a little while yet.”

“Leonard, how you do tease one?” cried Mary, sitting on the side of the lounge and placing back a stray curl. “Do you know she has some ways that strangely remind me of Dotty? It seemed two or three times as if Dotty was here right by my side, and as if it pleased her to see some one enjoying her little playthings.”

“What, has it come to that? playthings for the poor beaten waif? well well, dear wife, God bless you. What a humble future loomed on the horizon of that poor little child this morn-

ing! How strange it must seem to her! A home, fine clothes, playthings, words of tenderness, a bed like that, a—shall I say mother, like my own Mary?" and he kissed the flushed cheek.

"It must seem to her something as heaven will to the storm tossed wanderer," he went on, glancing at the child. "I only hope for your sakes that she may continue to be gentle and loveable, as you describe her, but we must hardly expect that. She has been among most dreadful associates, and though her tender years may have in some measure protected her, yet she did not escape scathless I promise you.

It could not be expected. So you did not find Dotty's clothes too nice for her?"

"I have changed my opinion," said Mary, gently. "Do you remember what you said, when you went away this noon?"

"Our Saviour's words?"

"Yes, I thought I could not do too much for Christ, so I have concluded to use all Dotty's little dresses, and she had a great many, you know. I feel thankful, now, that I have then ready made."

"So you have really decided to keep her?"

"Yes."

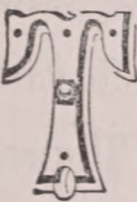
“And shall you still call her Anne?”

“Yes: I like the name; it was my mother’s, you know.”

“A pretty name—I like it too. I merely spoke because you have the privilege of course of changing it, if you like. She is ours, if we wish it. There are probably no relations of her’s that will ever come in contact with us. Dear little orphan, we must make her happy, Mary.”

CHAPTER VII.

Anne and the Thimble.

HE DAYS went by, and little Anne seemed in a long, strange wonder. Contrary to the expectations of those who had adopted her, she gave very little cause for anxiety. Her's was one of those sweet, retiring natures that it seems as if no amount of cruelty or hard fate will vitiate. She had her faults, of course; she would often take what pleased her, not seeming to understand the moral meaning of the action.

One day Nellie, who was growing more and more attached to the child, missed a gold thimble, that had been given her by a dear friend. After hunting for it high and low—Anne was out with her foster mother—she repaired to a little box in which the child kept her valuables. There, among a few valueless beads, and other trinkets, laid the gold thimble, snugly tucked in a corner. Nellie stood there in thought. “Can it be that the child will disappoint us, after all, and in this terrible manner? Is she a thief?” She had once found a little pencil of her’s in the child’s pocket. It made her quite sad, until the thought occurred

to her, it may be possible that she does not understand the right of possession. Who has she had to teach her? What does she know of right and wrong? At all events I trust she is not inherently a thief.

Presently Mary came in with the child, who seemed in perpetual astonishment over her own transformation, and never wearied of admiring her pretty little gloves and gaiters. She wore a tasteful dress, which of course had belonged to Dotty, for Mary had forgotten all her prejudices, and as she sometimes said, took the "belongings of one angel to enrich another with."

Nellie hastened to disrobe her,

thinking all the time how pretty she was growing, and caressing her with something like a mother's fondness.

The child was beginning to return these marks of affection. At first she had seemed so oppressed with the novelty of her situation, thinking perhaps that it was only for a season that she was to be treated with kindness, wondering if she should not soon be awakened by the coarse voice and cruel blow of Marm Hague, and sent, with threats and oaths, after whisky, that she had been shy of caresses, but now she gave kiss after kiss, and though her smile was still sometime almost painful in its hesitancy, while

her large bright eyes seemed to wonder whether these things were not illusions, still she improved. She loved her doll very much, and would sit for a long time, thoughtful, quite content, with the pleasure of rocking it to and fro. Sometimes she could be induced to tell of the past, and her memory seemed clear.

“Mamma did use to live in a pretty, pretty house, with a big garden,” she said one day, starting out of a reverie, during which she had been watching the antics of the canary.

“Was it in this city?” asked Mary.

She shook her head. “No, we came away from there in the cars; I was

little then, and my father came with us, but mamma kept crying." From this they inferred that her parents had once been in better circumstances.

"Had you no brother or sister?"

"Yes, I had a little sister, who did die when *she* did," meaning her mother.

To-day, as soon as Miss Anne was seated, Nellie spoke of her thimble,

"I wonder where it is?" she said; "I am sure I worked with it this morning. I wonder if Anne saw it, Aunt Nellie's pretty gold thimble?"

"I guess Anne *did* see it," said the child, with a profound look, "it is in Anne's box, becaused Anne liked it; she likes pretty things."

Nellie breathed freer.

“But Anne must never take things that belong to aunt and mama, because it is wrong.”

“Is it?” queried the little one, “must Anne be beat?”

“No, darling, Anne shall never be beaten while she lives with us,” said Nellie, tearfully. “She must never take things, or if she does she must always be ready to tell aunty, or mama where they are. Now go and get aunty’s thimble.”

The child ran away and soon came back with the thimble. The incident was told in the evening to Leonard.

“Think if such an artless nature as

that had been long left in those awful slums, how terrible it would have been crushed, mutilated out of all shape. Mary, we ought to go on our knees, night and morning, in thankfulness that we have been enabled to save that dear little soul. Who can tell what a blessing she may become to us. ‘Who-soever receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me.’”

CHAPTER VIII.

Gone Mad.

HEN Mrs. Longman came over to see how her friend Mary got on with her "new whim," she did not seem as satisfied with her poodles, and once she actually caught herself kissing the fresh sweet face of the little girl, who improved every day.

"But then you might not find one such child among a thousand," she said, as she talked of the matter. "Children of that kind are usually vicious little

monsters. I think, rather than run the risk of getting a bad child on my hands, I will stick to my poodles. I can sell them or trade them off when I get tired of them."

"On the other hand you might do great good by adopting a child, even an erring one. There are better chances of sewing good seed and rescuing a dark spirit, setting it, perhaps, among the spirits of light. It is even a grander and more satisfactory work in such a case."

Mrs. Longman shrugged her shoulders, and then looked again at the pretty little thing in her pink frock, turning over the leaves of her brightly

colored primmer, picking out the letters. Mary smiled.

“If you had seen her when she first came, Mrs. Longman, you would in all probability have despaired of doing anything with her. But remember she is partly what we have made her by indefatigable attention.”

“Well, I should want one like that to begin with,” laughed back the selfish woman. “I am really afraid of those filthy little things one meets with on the street.”

“There are asylums where you might find a dear little child,” said Nellie.

“Yes, but they always look so much

alike, and so unchildish. I want a thorough little beauty, if I take one, one that dress will show on, and that I should not be ashamed of anywhere. However, I think I will wait awhile, I'm not yet in the mood."

"I don't know as we do right to encourage her in taking a child," said Leonard, "she seems a vain, artificial woman, and might really do a great deal more harm than good. You heard what she said, she wants a beauty that she can make vain and showy like herself, a little dressmaker and milliner's block. What does she care for the starving soul? I don't believe she would ever give it a thought. She had

better have poodles without souls, and then she runs no risk of spoiling them."

"You are severe, Leonard," said Mary.

"I know I am, I never can help it when I see Mrs. Longman, rich and powerful, and think what blessed, golden opportunities she is throwing away, wasting her sympathies besides on those precious puppies. The woman was never sent into the world for that purpose, and it is aggravating to see so much money wrongly expended."

"Mrs. Longman had driven home. Her favorite maid met her with bad news. Fanny was very ill. She snapped and growled and the girl did not

dare to touch her. She would eat no food.

“How silly you are, Grace!” said her mistress, lounging to the room where Fanny, her red eyes more inflamed than ever, lay snapping ungraciously at whoever came near her. Not even her mistress had any influence over the spoiled pet. In vain she plied her with the most tempting viands, Fanny only snarled or yelped like a cross child. It went on so for a day or two, then Grace came in one morning so pale and ghostlike that even her unimpressible mistress was frightened.

“For mercy’s sake, what is the matter, child!” she cried.

“Fanny has gone mad.”

“Nonsense.”

“It is the truth; John said so; he caught her by throwing a thick piece of carpet over her, and shot her, out in the stable.”

“How dare he!” cried Mrs. Longman with blazing eyes.

“She frothed at the mouth and had dreadful spasms. O! it was awful.” She crept closer to her mistress, as she whispered, “But the most dreadful thing is, that last night she bit me; see here.”

Mrs. Longman sprang from her seat with a cry. There was a wound looking red and angry on the girl’s thumb.

A terror seized the woman, a selfish terror.

“You must go away at once, Grace,” she said, “you must go to the hospital, where they can care for you. I can do nothing; I should not know the first thing to do, and they always cut it, or burn it.”

“That should have been done last night,” said Grace. “I came up to say good-bye; I have not felt well all the morning. I shall go at once to the Sloane Hospital. Father is a watchman there, and he can get me in.”

“How can you be so calm about it?” cried her mistress, who was now weeping freely, for with what little heart

she possessed, she liked this girl, who had been a faithful and loving servant for three years.

“I suppose because God enables me to be,” said Grace. “I know there can be no help for me now, if Fanny was really mad. The poison has had time to circulate through my system, and no earthly help will avail me. I am sorry for poor father; but oh! I have tried to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, in my poor way, and he does not desert me now. My dear mistress, if I never see you again, remember my last words; don’t go on living without Christ, and without God, in the world. Pardon me for being so

bold, but I may never have another opportunity."

"Pardon you—when you have been so kind and faithful; oh! Grace, how can I let you go?" sobbed the woman, unconstrainedly. "I wish I had never seen the creature, the horrid brute; if it costs your life, my poor girl, I shall never forgive myself."

"It might have been worse," said Grace, simply. "If she had bitten you as well as me, or others in the house. I am going now, good-morning."

"I will see that you have every comfort, Grace," said her mistress, standing back, as Grace made an

expressive gesture that she should come no nearer. "O, Grace, I hope there's no danger!"

The girl who had with a strange calmness and forethought sent for the carriage, threw on her sacque and bonnet, and as Mrs. Longman stood at the window, lifted her grave, white face as she was driven off, and smiled. Her mistress never forgot that smile. She saw it at all seasons, and all hours, that brave, sadly sweet smile, and while she wondered at her composure, her heart told her that it was the constant reliance upon God, indicated in all her ways and in every service performed, that lent her strength.

She had often surprised Grace reading the Bible, or quaint little books that she almost despised her for liking. She remembered that Grace had said once, when she offered her a highly wrought fiction,

“Perhaps I was brought up too strict, ma’am, but my father never allowed me.” She had laughed at the answer, and called her a little Puritan, but now she questioned of her own soul whether such reading prepared the mind for any great and solemn crisis, and something within thundered, “No!”

CHAPTER IX.

A Father's Letter.

THEY summoned John and questioned him about Fanny.

“He was sure she was mad,” he said, “the instant he clapped his two eyes on her.”

“But how can that take place at this season?” queried his mistress.

John couldn't pretend to tell. He only knew that he had a dog once that went mad in January, and he didn't believe it was all owing to the

weather but some disease inherent in dog-nature, he couldn't tell what.

"And did you know that Fanny bit Grace?"

"Not till this morning," said John, "and it's all up with her," he added, shaking his head.

"O! I hope not," cried Mrs. Longman, distressfully. "I shall never want to see a dog again as long as I live. Petit must be sent away; I must pay for his care or have him killed. As for you, John, go every day to the hospital, and inquire for Grace."

"I should do that, anyway," replied John, who was very fond of Grace.

As for Mrs. Longman, all her comfort was gone. She walked through her richly furnished rooms, listlessly, as one without aim or hope; she thought continually of the good girl who had been like an angel under her roof, saw always that white, firm face, that smile so touching in its sadness; heard always those last words, as the young girl stood on the threshold of the door, aye, and on the threshold of death, "Don't go on living without Christ and without God in the world." Of these things, assuredly, the rich and fashionable Mrs. Longman had never thought before. All her life she had existed merely to dress and eat,

to see and be seen. Now these comforts and pleasures seemed to be losing their attraction to her. She had been in the habit of spending money freely on herself and her pampered household, of whom her dogs had been the most important part. These creatures had cost her more than she liked to think of, while they had given her no adequate return, nor offered any intellectual gratification. As she walked back and forth, thinking over these things, there came a letter to her, directed in a strange hand. She opened it and read as follows.—

“MY DEAR MADAM:—At the re-



quest of my daughter I write you. I am to say that the doctors do not think her case a hopeless one, as they are trying a new remedy that has cured a great many in Germany. I am also to say that my daughter sends you her love and is very happy whatever the crisis may be. You are not to be anxious on her account, as she has settled with her God, and feels sure that her heavenly mansion is prepared for her. I am to say that she prays for you, that you may see Christ as she sees Him, that she has been praying for you ever since she has lived with you, and if her death will effect a change in your heart, she would be willing to go.

And now for myself. My dear child is in great danger, as I cannot help seeing, though encouraged to hope. She has ever been one of the sweetest and best of children, though you may be surprised to hear of no kin to me. The fact is that my wife found her one day, tramping about the country in very poor company, and determined to adopt her, though we had then three children. The Lord rewarded us for it, though we were poor in purse. One after another our own children died, but this girl lived to prove a blessing to us. She was always a good little thing, and took as it were, naturally, to the truths of the Bible.

Many a time she has kept up our sinking faith when it seemed as if everything went against us. Lately, while my wife was in poor health, she has sent us nearly all her wages. I thank God for her, and also that I have been able to train her up so that she is calm and willing while looking, it may be, for death.

“Very truly yours, ———.”

This letter only deepened the intensity of Mrs. Longman's emotions. She had been in Grace's room, and taken from there the Bible used habitually by the girl, (she always made it a point to have a Bible in every servant's room,)

and when she entered her own apartment she opened it, stealthily, and the first lines she read were these—

“Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.”

She read the verse again and again, turning it over in her mind, holding it in every possible light. “This poor man,” she said to herself, “burdened his household with a stranger, while he was, maybe, hard pushed to feed his own little ones: and I, rich and of some influence, have sat in luxury and idleness, petting two yelping lap-dogs, spending money upon them, and starving my own soul. Strange that I seem never to have read that verse before.

It must have a wonderful meaning. Little as I know of Christ, or religion, I know that if there is anything in either, there is everything. Christ is God, and to receive a little child in his name, is like receiving the Lord of heaven and earth into one's house. How stupendous the meaning of that little verse! One never feels worthy of receiving such a blessing. I wonder if I took a little child to care for, God would reveal himself to me? But am I prepared for it? Can I give up the ease and even idleness which have become my second nature? Can I bring myself to love a poor, neglected little child, too look after its interest? No,

I am not right myself, how can I train a child? O, that I were a Christian! How vapid and purposeless all my past life appears as I look back upon it."

CHAPTER X.

The Story of Little Dotty.



ANNE sat rocking in her little chair and singing, "I want to be an angel."

Presently she looked up and asked, "Mamma, what is an angel?"

"Why, when little girls die and go to heaven, they become angels."

"Only little girls?"

"No dear, everybody who has loved the Lord Jesus, and tried to follow after his example."

"Then is my mamma an angel?"

"I hope so, my dear."

"Did you ever know a little girl that grew to be an angel?"

"Yes, dear," tears filled Mary's eyes, "the little one, for whom that pretty dress and apron you have on were made, went to be an angel, one day."

Anne smoothed down the folds of the white apron, and looked it thoughtfully all over.

"Did she ever wear it?"

"Often, dear; she was particularly fond of that little apron."

"Did she look like me?"

"Sometimes I think she did a little, she had blue eyes, and curls, just like yours."

“Was she your little girl?”

“Yes, my own little darling sister, whose mamma went away to be an angel too, when she was born. So I always took care of her, and dressed her. She used to love dearly to sing ‘I want to be an angel,’ and ‘Christ in the Manger,’ and many pretty tunes.”

“I wish you would tell me about her,” said Anne, lifting her doll from the floor, and preparing to give it a long nap. “Was you sorry when she went to be an angel.”

“I was very sorry, dear. It seemed to me that she went in such a strange way that I could not for many weeks

be reconciled at all, and I fear I was almost wicked in my sorrow. She was a dear little girl, only a few months older than you are now. She had blue eyes, as I said before, and golden hair that hung in long curls, and pretty red lips that were, oh! so sweet to kiss."

Here little Anne pursed up her own little red lips, and Mary bent softly over and kissed them. Aunt Nellie came in at that moment with a large new doll in her hands, and some pretty silks that she was making it a dress with. So she smiled and stooped over to kiss Anne likewise, and it made the child very happy.

"One day Dotty, her name was



Harriett, but we always called her Dotty, was taken sick, and then she had a fever," continued Mary. "But she got quite well, and grew prettier and dearer than ever. Then the doctors said we must take her out into the country to see the green grass and the red flowers grow; that she needed to run about in the fresh air, and have her yellow curls tumbled by the merry wind that loves to frolic over the fields, and her pretty white skin turned brown by the kisses of the sun. So we all set to work to make our little Dotty some new cool dresses, and Aunt Nellie there made her one of the nicest little sun bonnets out of

white muslin, and run it full of little cords, and it fit her dear little head, and made her look like a tidy, cunning woman. Well,"—Mary stopped knitting now, and went to smoothing Anne's soft hair as she sat right under her hand,—“there is a nice old farm house, forty miles from here, and it belongs to Uncle Ralph. You have never seen Uncle Ralph. He's a tall farmer man with a long silver beard, and beautiful brown eyes, and he farms and writes books for children, beautiful books they are, Anne shall read them when she is old enough. So we thought we would take her out to that fine farm, where there is a blue river running

right through." Mary shuddered now, but she kept on smoothing Anne's hair, and Anne kept hugging her doll, pretending it was fast asleep though its eyes were staring right at her.

"It was a pleasant July morning when we took the cars for Lineville, and Dotty, who had never been on the cars before was as happy as she could be, singing all the way. When we got there, Uncle Ralph was waiting for us with the great farm wagon, and two splendid great gray horses that looked as if whatever dearth there might be in the rest of the world, at the old oak farm there were more oats than a great many gray horses could eat,

and hay enough to match them. So Dotty was set up on the seat,—dear little thing how her sweet eyes seem to look out at me now, as she eagerly watched for me to follow her; she knew no mother but me, poor little darling! By-and-by the mighty frame of the old house, that was as gray as its owner, came in sight, and all around it were the farm buildings, the wide barn, whose front always looked to me with its two windows, long door and big trough in front, like a great good-natured, tawny face, smiling broadly with welcome. Back of the house and on one side were great sloping hills, that seemed some way to

swell into the blue atmosphere—
everywhere else the cornfields were
spread out, and the blue brown
orchards, with great masses of shade
lying along under the fruit trees, as
if they were improvising enormous
baskets for the fruit to drop into. At
this time Dottie's eyes were quite
heavy with sleep, for she had been
awaked up very early, and two
journeys were almost too much for
her."

CHAPTER XI.

Potty in the Country.



UNT JENNY, Uncle Ralph's wife, was at the door, waiting for us," continued Mary, "a large, handsome woman, covered all over with a great white apron that was as white as snow."

"Like mine," said little Anne, patting her wee apron, complacently.

"Yes, as white as our little Anne's, here."

"And did she wear it on her face?" asked the child with exceeding anxiety.

“No, dear,” and Mary and Aunt Nellie laughed over the wise little head; “I mean all over her dress which was gray, and quite short, showing a pair of thick black cloth shoes underneath. And this good Aunt Jenny took little Dotty in her arms, and cried a little, because she was a poor dear motherless baby, she said, for Aunt Jennie was my mother’s only sister, and they had loved each other dearly. So she carried the child up into a great square, white chamber, where there was a bed that seemed almost as large and high as this room. And after Dotty had had some fresh milk and bread, and had been un-

dressed and tied into a nice long night gown, Aunt Jenny popped her on top of this great soft bed, and there she laid like a little mouse in a bushel of feathers, laughing and lifting her head and peeping at us. But by-and-by her little blue eyes grew heavy, just as Anne's do, and forgetting that it was day-time, she said the little prayer that Anne says, and in a few minutes she was fast asleep."

"*Wasn't* that nice?" cried Anne.

"Beautiful! and she slept two or three hours, so that we had dinner all cleared away when she waked up, but Aunt Jenny had saved her some huckleberries and milk."

Anne smacked her lips.

“Well, I never could begin to tell you what a good time Dotty had,” said Mary, her voice trembling, for she had never said so much about Dotty before. “Sometimes she would go into the great barn with Aunt Jenny to find eggs as white as milk, sometimes she fed the hens, and laughed till she cried at the funny antics of the scores of little chickens who would get mixed together, and then when their mothers cried, sorted themselves in a twinkling, under Speckle Hen and Yellow Wing, and Black Foot, and Turtle Head, for all the hens had names, and knew them. They would come at the

call of Uncle Ralph, but never for anybody else. And sometimes I could see her perched up on a load of hay with one of the farm hands beside her, or riding on the back of one of the sober old gray horses, as happy as a little queen. Blessed baby!" and Mary stopped to wipe away a few tears and then smiled down at little Anne, who was so much interested that she had let her doll slide down to the floor where it laid helplessly on its face. "Sometimes when I missed her, I could hear her cry out 'Here I am, mamma Mary!' and by-and-by I could see a little face like a white and red rose upturned from the midst of a

great clump of grass that almost hid her. Never did a child enjoy herself more; whether she rode or walked, by herself, or in company, she was always as merry and as happy as a little human lark. She did love flowers so! and not a day passed but she collected beautiful bunches, and however often she brought them, I must put them carefully in water and keep them nice and bright. Up stairs in a little box Aunt Nellie has the last flowers she ever picked, little angel, and Annie shall see them sometimes.

“There was a deep river running through the farm, but it was almost half a mile from the house, and we

never had gone that way, because Uncle Ralph said the land was low and not very clear. Someway I had quite forgotten about the river, and as Dotty was almost always in sight when playing round, I never thought of it as a dangerous place. One day I had dressed Dotty in her prettiest white muslin dress, and tied the sleeves up with blue ribbon, kissed her cool little dimpled shoulders, and sent her out to play. I was not well, myself, and charging the servant to look after her, I went to lie down and try and sleep off my headache. I never shall forget how the little darling came running back and calling out, ‘Dive me anover

tiss, mamma Mary,' nor how I hugged her and took my fill of kisses, she was so bright and sweet and beautiful! O, how little did I think, it was the last, last time!" For a moment Mary hid her face in her hands.

"Don't cry, mamma," murmured Anne, plaintively.

"No, dear, I was only thinking I ought to be so glad that Dotty is a blessed little angel, free from all pain and trouble. I was awakened by what seemed strange noises. When I went down stairs I found that Uncle Ralph had been thrown from his horse and seriously bruised. Everybody was running this way and that, and the

house was all in confusion. For a time I was as panic stricken as the rest, but after a while I suddenly remembered Dotty, and going to the door called her. To my fear and astonishment she was nowhere to be seen, I ran out crying 'little Dotty!' with all my might, but no little Dotty answered, then I hurried to the barn, but it was empty, only of sweet smells of hay, oats, and sunshine. I shall never forget how I felt when I came out of that barn. All at once my strength seemed to leave me, and I sank down upon the soft grass, and looked up hopelessly into the blue sky, that appeared as if suddenly some great dark

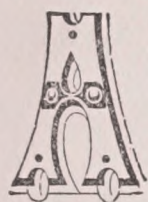
shadow had overspread it; I seemed to see Dotty's face everywhere, yet to feel that to me she was nowhere. O, how my heart ached! I ran back to the farm and questioned all the servants. Uncle Ralph was easier now, so that some of them hurried away to find her. Three men went off in as many directions, and I took another, calling all the time 'Dotty, dear little Dotty!' And with every step it seemed as if the dark shadow grew darker. To make it more dreadful a thunder shower came on, and it began to rain hard, so that in a few moments I was drenched to the skin. Ah! I never shall forget that dreadful day when every body came

back looking scared, and said that Dotty was nowhere to be seen. All at once I saw the river; I had never been there, but I felt as if the banks were steep, and the precious lamb had strayed thither and fallen in. Nobody could believe it, but when the dark night came on and still the child was not to be seen, they were sad enough all over the house. Well, I could not rest, I think I was almost crazy, every few moments I would think of some new place and fly off and search, feeling as if Dotty must come, and yet that she would not, that she could not, that God had taken her in some mysterious way to himself, that I should never

kiss and hug her as I had kissed and hugged her that morning, when little knowing it, I was parting with her for the last time."

CHAPTER XII.

Dotty an Angel.



ALL that night I neither slept nor rested, I could not keep still. Some of the farm-hands had been down to the river with lanterns, for they all loved Dotty dearly, and could not bear to think she would never come back, but they saw no signs of my poor child. In the morning they took ropes and boats and began to drag the river all around the house.

“But Dotty was an angel long before that time, little Anne, though they did

not find her till night, under the dark water, white and still, and drenched like a lily whose life has gone out while it floated. Yes, Dotty was an angel, and her wet white robes and blue ribbons had been exchanged for the beautiful spotless robes of heaven. Her little fingers that would never clasp mine again, oh ! how I held them and kissed them, but the life would not come back, it was too late. Hours and hours she had been in the river, hours and hours her little spirit had been with the dear Saviour whom she always loved to talk about. I don't know what I did while she lay there in the house,—Uncle Ralph was very

ill, Aunt Jenny had to be much of the time with him, but nobody touched the darling but me. I took off all the little wet clothes, and wiped the limbs that seemed rigid and cold as marble. I put on her simple little nightgown, and laid her in the middle of that great bed, and then I lay down beside her. God mercifully gave me unconsciousness for a time; I slept all the night, and found myself beside her in the morning with pitying tearful neighbors looking on.

“Well, dear, we thought we had best bury darling little Dotty under the grass and flowers she had loved so well; so we found a beautiful spot on Uncle

Ralph's farm, and we laid the dear baby there. And that's how blessed little Dotty came to be an angel."

"I should like to be an angel, and see her," said Anne, picking up her doll and patting it to sleep again.

"Mary," said Nellie, looking up, then starting towards the door, "here is Uncle Ralph." Anne drew up nearer to Mary and held her doll more closely as the tall, bronzed farmer entered.

"Well, how do you all do?" he cried, while Anne wondered where his mouth was as he kissed Mary and Nellie.

"Why who is this wee one?" he asked, looking at Anne with his gentle, loving brown eyes.

"It's a little girl I have adopted, uncle," said Mary.

"You don't tell me!" cried Uncle Ralph, smiling, and putting his soft felt hat into Nellie's hands. "Why! why! and she's a nice little birdie, with blue eyes. How long have you had her?"

"Only a few weeks," was the reply, "but she is such a loving little thing, I feel as if she had been with me for years."

"I'm very glad, I'm sure," said Uncle Ralph; "I have been wishing you would do this thing a great while. There are so many motherless bairns afloat on this great sea of humanity. I suppose she had no mother?"



“Won’t you come to me, little one?” Page 113.



“Neither mother nor father,” replied Mary.

“Ah! poor dear,” sighed Uncle Ralph as he seated himself and held out his hands; “won’t you come to me, little one?”

Anne looked at him for a moment, and then reading with a child’s wonderful intuition the goodness and sweetness of his life, in the soft brown eyes, and the glance of sympathy, she went over and found herself lying softly against the long, flowing gray beard, pressed to a heart that beat lovingly for all mankind.

“When is she coming out to Oak Farm?” he queried, patting her cheeks.

“Is that where Dotty went to be an angel?” asked Anne.

“Yes, dear, but the river is all fenced in now, and a great mill built on it, so that I don’t think Anne could get in there, even if she wanted to. Dotty’s grave looks as fresh now almost as if it was summer,” he said, “for the little evergreen bushes and box are almost as bright as June sunlight could make them. You must come out there, Mary, just as soon as the warm weather is on us. This little thing has never seen the country.”

“I lived there once,” said Anne.

“O, you did; then you have watched the grass growing, and the pretty

birdies flitting from branch to branch, and the flowers bursting out into pretty colors, I dare say, but it's done all over again every spring and summer, a grand resurrection of buried nature changing all the world to beauty. Good! perhaps you were born in the country; if so its sweet fresh air will seem natural to you."

CHAPTER XIII.

Uncle Ralph's Visit.

THE only son that Uncle Ralph had ever had became intemperate, and left his father's home in anger.

"I suppose Uncle Ralph will hunt as usual for some tidings of his unfortunate boy," said Nellie, as the old gentleman went out.

"Yes," responded Mary, "he never comes to the city but he goes about trying to hear tidings of my poor cousin.

I have long thought him dead, so has Leonard."

"He married, didn't he?"

"Yes, a very pretty, sweet girl, though possessing little force of character. She was an orphan, poor thing, who kept school. I suppose he must have led her a terrible life. After they were married they moved to Stamford, where I heard she still tried to keep school, but he grew worse and worse, and at last they came to the city. Poor Uncle Ralph, he never had but the one child, and he almost broke his heart. It must be terrible to be disappointed in one's children so. Every year he comes in town and goes on a

tour through the city, trying in every way to find traces of his son. Last year he thought he had been successful. He was directed to a house where a poor man lay dying of consumption. For several days Uncle Ralph went back and forth, but at the last he found out that he had been giving care to an utter stranger. He was not sorry for that, of course, only it was a great disappointment."

"‘If I can only find him alive and penitent,’ he has often said, ‘I should thank God and then be ready to go.’”

Uncle Ralph came back to dinner and he and Anne were soon the best of friends. He was ready for any-

thing, tackled into harness and driven about, to carry Anne on his back, like the nicest kind of a nice horse, to play shop and weigh out enormous quantities of nothing, to take long journeys from one end of the room to the other, to tell pretty stories, to do whatever his small tyrant demanded.

“Have you got any little children?” she asked. Uncle Ralph shook his head.

“No little children, but plenty of little kittens,” he said.

“O, little kittens!”

“Yes, in the big barn, six or seven of them, and some of them are as pretty and cunning as ever a little girl would wish to see. And then I have

twenty, thirty, forty of the nicest little piggies that ever were, as clean and round as the kittens; only think, this room full, almost."

Anne drew a long sigh of utter amazement.

"And the dearest little white lam-mies, he went on, little things that can hardly stagger about; and they do look so funny."

"I should like to see *them*," said Anne.

"And a dozen little calves, some red, some white, some dappled, that play about the fields all the long days when the grass is green. Then there are the rabbits."

“O, I *dearly* love rabbits,” said Anne, “pretty little white things with long ears.”

“And as soft as satin. Then there are the ducks and chickens, dozens and dozens of them, yellow and white and brown and every color.”

“Dotty used to feed the chickens, didn’t she?”

“Yes, Dotty loved the little chickens,” and Uncle Ralph sighed heavily. Perhaps he thought of other dimpled fingers that had so often fed the chickens, the hands of his own boy, his curly headed blue-eyed Ralph, who had persisted in going wrong though his father had tried his utmost to

make him a good boy and a noble man. He was not sad long, though, this Uncle Ralph, who always put aside his own griefs to make other people happy.

“I think,” he said the next day, when it was raining and he could not go out, “I think I’ll tell my pet a story.”

CHAPTER XIV.

"The Little Child."

THAT'S the name of my story," said Uncle Ralph. "The little child was an orphan. He was sent out houseless, and sometimes, poor little waif, he was pushed aside by thoughtless travelers. Once somebody struck him, it might be out of sheer wantonness, and the poor little man cried wofully as he moved along, with only cold bare hands to wipe his streaming eyes. He remembered a time, young as he was, when loving

arms enfolded him. To be thrust forth now, into the cold and storm, to be clothed in rags, to be fed on mouldy crusts, was a new and a terrible experience. And the little pauper boy sat down upon the curb-stones, and began to think. His feet were bare, red, and cold; the chill wind cut through his ragged garments, but he did not feel that much, he was getting used to it. He wanted to think.

“Who were these people passing him, looking so warm and comfortable? What did it mean that they should be happy and cheerful, and he so sad? None of them could have heavy hearts he was sure. He looked up into the

sky, so cold and blue! Who lived up there, and why didn't God, who was so good, give him something to eat? Somebody had told him once that God would take care of him, where was God? O, if he could only see God for one little moment, or the angels that the good man told him about when his mother died! Did folks ever see angels?

“An organ-grinder came near and took his stand. What beautiful things he played! their melody lightened the boy's heart somewhat, but it didn't warm him or make him less hungry. He kept shivering in spite of the music, and he felt so lonely!

so desponding! Then the organ-grinder passed away and the people kept thronging by; they never heeded, they never cared for the little child sitting on the curb-stone, they had so many other things to think of, some of children of their own to whom they were carrying pretty toys in hands and pockets. The carriages passed, and the carts, and a company of soldiers with flags and music, but it was all dumb show to him. He was trying to think with such a dull pain at his heart. Presently several rude, coarse boys gathered behind him, winking and laughing at one another. Another moment the youngest one,

with the spite of a demon, gave a thrust, and over went the poor, harmless little child in the gutter. One scream of pain, one sob of anguish as he gathered himself up, and looked after the boys now flying away with shouts of mirth. O, how cruel it seemed in them, how cruel! The hungry child walked slowly on, sobbing and shivering.

“At last he stopped at the corner of a street, the little, weeping, homeless, motherless child. An apple-stand stood near, and his longing eyes fastened themselves upon it. It was kept by an old blear-eyed man, who was very cross. There were cakes on the

stand such as are dear to the taste of children, and the poor little mouth of the houseless child watered as he saw other boys deposit their pennies, and eat their cakes. He had no penny, and though gaunt hunger looked out of his eyes, the cross old man never offered him a morsel. Perhaps the man did not think. Contact with poverty had made his heart hard, and hungry faces were no new sight to him.

“The tempter came. The old man’s back was turned. A vile boy at his side, nudged the little boy’s elbow.

“‘Take one,’ he said, ‘I’ll give you half.’

“The little child gazed at him,

steadily. He saw something in the bad, bold eyes that made him shrink, something that set his heart beating.

“‘Steal one, I say,’ whispered the boy, ‘I wont tell, and we’ll go away and eat it.’

“‘It’s wicked to steal,’ replied the houseless child.

“‘O you fool!’ muttered the wicked tempter, and smote him in the eyes, his heavy hand dealing a blow that sent the poor little child against the wall, his whole frame quivering with anguish. The terrible blow had blinded him for a moment, a great sob choked him; what had he done to be treated so?

“He started to cross the street. A blinding pain made his poor temples ring again.

“‘Back! back!’ cried a frantic voice. ‘Good heavens, the child is under his feet! back! back!’

“Too late.

“‘O mamma, our horse has run over a poor little boy, oh! mamma!’ sobbed a beautiful child.

“‘Is he hurt?’ the woman’s face is pale as ashes. ‘Yes, I see he is sadly hurt. Take him in; it was our carelessness. Thank God we are at home.’

“There was no anguish now. Perhaps God saw that he had borne all he could, and so took the poor little broken

heart up there to heal. How very white and quiet he was.

“‘What a sweet little face!’ murmured a womanly voice, ‘a sweet, sweet face!’ and tears fell on his forehead, but he does not feel them.”

“O, the poor, poor little boy!” sobs Nellie, “oh! the poor little child! I wish he had kept on the sidewalk; I wish he had staid with his mother.”

“Alas! in this world there was no mother for him to stay with.

“The doctor came, said he was not dead, but would very likely die. There was a hospital near, the poor creature had better be sent there. But the good woman would not hear to

that. She would care for him herself, she said, he had been injured by her horses, and she felt it was her duty to attend to him. Besides, it was likely that the child had no mother. Such a boy, with a face so sweet and girlish, so pure and loveable, would never be sent in the streets like that, if he had a mother. Besides, and here her tears fell, there was a little mound, not yet green, over just such a child. No, no, it was not in her heart to put the poor wounded boy away. 'Let him stay whether he lived or died.'

"Well, the weary, weary days passed on. One morning the little boy opened his dim blue eyes, but he did not know

himself. His glance fell wearily on his hands. There were white ruffles at the wrists; the bed was snowy white, too, and a soft, crimson light fell over everything."

"‘I am in heaven,’ murmured the child sweetly, ‘God has made me an angel.’"

"What vision of loveliness was that glancing from the shadow behind the bed? The rich curls fell all about a face of exquisite beauty, the beaming eyes looked love and gentleness upon him.

"‘And that’s an angel, too,’ he said softly. ‘I’m so glad! they won’t strike me here, they won’t ask me to steal,

and I shall never die again. Now if I could only see mamma.'

" 'My dear boy, are you better this evening?' asked a low, sweet voice.

" He turned, slowly, wearily.

" 'Are you better, dear?'

" 'Are you my mother?' he queried.

" 'Yes,' and there were sobs and tears, 'yes, my poor little child, I will be your mother and you shall be my son. Do you love me?'

" 'Yes, I love you, mother. Is this heaven?'

" 'Heaven! no, darling, it is still earth; but God sent you to our hearts to be loved and cared for. See, here is a little sister for you, and you must be

very happy with her. Kiss him, Nellie.'

"Her rosy lips touched his pale cheek, and a heavenly smile lightened up his face. The past was not all forgotten, but it was gone. No more crusts, oaths, harsh words and blows. No more begging at basement doors, and looking half famished to envy a dog gnawing his bone in the street. No more fear of rude children, no more sleeping on and under door-steps, and listening in terror to the drunkard, and the quarrels of the vicious and depraved.

"Yes, the past seemed very far gone, and in the rosy future was love, even

God and the angels. Certainly Holy Spirits had guarded that child and guided him out of evil into good. Surely henceforth he could put his hand trustingly in theirs, and turn his face heavenward.

“Yes, so it was to be! The little teachable child, a jewel picked from the mire, a brand plucked from the burning, was yet to illumine the dark paths of this world, with his holy, heavenlike teachings. Like a dove he was to go forth over the waters, and find the Olive Branch with which to garland his glad tidings to a world sunk in sin. Blessings, then, on all who hold their arms out towards

needy little children, making their homes arks of refuge. Beautiful stars shall they wear in their crown of rejoicing, for surely there is nothing brighter in all the world than the redeemed soul of a little child."

CHAPTER XV.

G o o d N e w s .

HEN Uncle Ralph was quite through, little Anne was wide awake, listening with an interest far beyond her years.

“And the little boy got a nice home, just as I did,” she said, after a little pause.

“Yes, my dear little puss,” said Uncle Ralph, hugging her again, and kissing her. “Someway my heart warms wonderfully to the child,” he added to Mary, “and did from the first.

But I see visitors coming, so I'll be off again." He had hardly set little Anne down and left the room, when Mrs. Longman was announced. Not the fluttering, lace-bedecked, poodle-leading Mrs. Longman, but a personage of graver habit, quieter dress, and a sadder face.

"O, my dear, I cannot tell you how thankful I am," she said, as she seated herself, "and I felt as if I must come here the first thing and tell you my gratitude."

"What has happened, my dear Mrs. Longman?" asked Mary.

"Something has *not* happened, which I very much dreaded," said

Mrs. Longman. "My poor Grace is considered cured. It seems they had a German remedy, which had never been tried in this country, and they experimented with it upon her. The result is that she only had a few of the most distressing symptoms at first, and they are perfectly convinced that she is quite free from the terrible malady. She is to remain there a month yet, however, and then I shall take her back again."

"I am really very glad for you; we were all afraid of the worst," said Mary.

"And how sweet your dear little girl looks! O, if I only thought I

could do as I ought by such a child, I would take one. I see my duty in a different light, since Grace left me," she added tearfully. "At all events I have discarded poodles. I have done with mere sentimentalising over pets, I trust. The horrible shock given me by poor Fanny will suffice my life time. I shall have to take lessons in goodness of you, Mrs. Dinsmore, till Grace comes back."

"O, not of me, Mrs. Longman, there is a better guide to go to."

"Yes, but you must remember I am a perfect novice in all matters of religion. I am ashamed to confess it, and yet such is the truth. I know, I

feel I am going wrong, but I seem powerless to find a better way. May I come and talk with you about it, sometime?"

"With pleasure," Mary said.

"Thank you, and now I must be off. I felt as if I wanted you to hear the good news, and so came straight to you. And I feel now as if I had something to do in the world. I have absolutely been living for no purpose that I can see, but to enjoy myself, thinking nothing of the poor and neglected, or if I did, only to despise them. How I could pass them by so indifferently, when I know that God is the maker of us all, I cannot see.

If now I can live to some purpose, I shall strive to find and to do my duty."

"And my little Anne will be the first fruit of much good, I trust," said Mary, the tears of thankfulness and gratitude welling up to her eyes, as she stooped down to kiss the child.

The last day of Uncle Ralph's stay had come. He had seen Anne in all her phases, and often declared that such another child could not be found. Not that she was free from faults; they were strewn as thickly as in the character and among the habits of most children, but she had been nurtured in sorrow, and the experience

of her childish life had subdued her. Mary was rarely fitted to bring out the best there was in her; her governing power was love, and the child appreciated her home, and looked back with shuddering upon the misery she had undergone.

That evening Mary's husband came home with a strange look on his face. "At last," he said, "Uncle Ralph has found traces of his long lost son. In searching, he came across a poor family with whom had been left a box of old letters, and these letters were written by young Ralph to his wife, before and after their marriage. Uncle Ralph has been busy all the

afternoon, and I believe he will be successful in learning all the history of his poor boy.

At that moment Uncle Ralph came in. He looked very serious, and for some moments did not speak a word. Then he took little Anne up, who had run towards him, and seated her on his knee, looked tenderly in her face, and kissed her again and again. Mary could not tell why, but the simple action brought the tears into her eyes, it was done with such strange solemnity. Then he looked up, the tears were also glittering on his lashes, and he said, in a low broken voice, "My children, I ought to be very thankful

to our good God, very thankful. I have heard full tidings of my lost boy.

“When I left you, Leonard,” he continued, “I found the place that I was directed to, you remember. It was a poor home, but a cleanly and happy one. There, it seems, my poor Ralph was known, the good people used often to go and see him in his last illness. When he died, penitent, they think, only at the last revealing his true name, they did all they could to have him buried decently. The little child, for there was a little child,” and here he paused, “was taken by a woman who promised to

do her best by her. This woman died, some little time afterwards, I am informed, and the child fell into the hands of a friend, who ill used and abused her. That child's name was Anne," here he kissed the little creature, while an exclamation arose from all present, "and the cruel woman who had her in charge, was called Marm Hague. See how strangely God's providence had led me, has led us all; my poor boy's only child has come back to me at last. You are my own little grand-daughter, pet, my own flesh and blood, my little child."

Wonder and delight pervaded the hearts of those who had been instru-

mental in caring for this little stranger.

“It seems,” continued Uncle Ralph, “that my poor boy was delirious through much of his sickness, and at the last, when his senses returned, he was not able to express himself, only by signs, or I am sure he would have sent his little child to me. Poor boy! the way of the transgressor is hard, as he found out to his cost. I was willing always to aid him, but in his pride and wickedness he cast us off, his mother and me. Ah! it was not for nothing that my heart went out towards this lamb. God be praised! I can say with a full heart, God be praised!”

Little Anne looked up at him wonderingly.

“Are you my grandpa?” she asked.

“Yes, darling, did they never tell you about me.”

“Mamma did sometimes, and she cried.”

“Poor mamma, I wonder if she sees us now?”

“I am very glad,” murmured Mary; “I suppose we shall lose her now.”

“No, I’m not going to take her from you, you know how to train her better than her foolish old grandparents, only I shall stipulate that you pass your summers with us. This dear child, I foresee, will be the apple of my eye;

train her for God, my dear, and then she will be a useful and happy woman."

So little Anne, through these wonderful providences, found the nearest and best friend that a child can have in this world. Of Mrs. Longman, I have to say that she became a thoughtful and kind-hearted woman, that she adopted not one, but in course of time five or six little homeless, motherless waifs, and found her reward in her own conscience, and in their love and well-doing. In my next story, I shall follow the fortunes of little Anne, and show how she became a good and noble woman.

THE END.





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